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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
USCINCENT MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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1. Mideast
2. UN Reform

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Key stories in the media:  
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All media led with the speech PM Sharon delivered in Hebrew to the UN General Assembly on Thursday. The major media focused on Sharon's conciliatory words, as he reached out to the Palestinians and said that Israel is willing to make painful concessions. Sharon said that Israel respects the Palestinians and has no aspirations to rule over them. He added: "They are also entitled to freedom and a national, sovereign existence in a state of their own." Sharon also spoke of the deep connection of the Jewish people to the land of Israel since Biblical times, and about the unbroken continuity of Jewish settlement. Sharon presented his red lines, which pertain to Israel's independence and sovereignty, and its right to live "in full security and without threats and terror." Sharon talked about the importance of the separation fence in saving lives. Sharon also expressed condolences to the people of the U.S. following the Hurricane Katrina disaster, and addressed the U.S. President as "my friend, President George Bush."

Israel Radio quoted PA Spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeineh as saying that Sharon was trying to make the road map fail, and to prevent the peace process from moving forward. The radio quoted Jibril Rajoub, the PA's National Security Advisor, as saying that Sharon's address was a collection of lies and that his words were full of venom. The station says that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas and Palestinian PM Ahmed Qurei have not yet responded to the speech.

All media quoted Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz as saying on Thursday that in light of the smuggling from Sinai to the Gaza Strip, Israel will reject the PA's request to permit its security forces to increase its own supplies of weapons and ammunition. Mofaz also ordered heightened security checks at crossing with the Gaza Strip. The media also quoted Mofaz as saying he will tell Egypt that the chaos at the border cannot go on. Leading media reported that the security establishment is considering bolstering the 230-km-long border with Egypt.

The media reported that on Thursday, Sharon discussed with British PM Tony Blair the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program. In his speech, Sharon said: "Even today, there are those who sit here as representatives of a country whose leadership calls to wipe Israel off the face of the earth, and no one speaks out." The media reported on a meeting between Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the FMs of Britain, Germany, and France, which focused on the matter. Leading media reported that, referring to the possible investigations of Israeli officers in the UK, Sharon told Blair that he hoped that he, a former general, would not be

arrested when visiting the UK.

Major media quoted MK Binyamin Netanyahu as saying that Sharon's speech represented additional evidence that he is veering to the Left. Maariv reported that Netanyahu associates are envisaging for the first time the possibility of Netanyahu's defeat in the race for Likud leadership.

Leading media reported that President Bush spoke Wednesday at a national dinner in Washington that was the culminating event of the celebration of 350 years of Jewish life in America. Ha'aretz reported that the President bestowed the Medal of Honor upon Nazi concentration camp survivor and Korean War POW Tibor Rubin, but that he did not mention the "long years when recognition of the Jew's bravery had been denied."

Ha'aretz, Jerusalem Post, and Israel Radio quoted Qatari FM Hamad bin Jasim bin Jabir Al Thani as saying that his country is considering establishing diplomatic relations with Israel even before the foundation of a Palestinian state. The Qatari FM told reporters that he wished for a nuclear-free Middle East. The radio said that, contrary to expectations, no meeting took place between Sharon and the Emir of Qatar.

Ha'aretz reported that five Jewish families have recently moved to a building in the Tel Rumeida quarter of Hebron, which was purchased by residents of the Jewish settlement in Hebron.

Jerusalem Post reported that Gerhard Jarosch, the senior Austrian judicial investigator investigating the flow of funds in the Cyril Kern affair, told the newspaper that he strongly suspects that Sharon was given a bribe in 2002.

Ha'aretz cited a Water Commission report as saying that if the Palestinians go ahead with building a sewage pipe from the Gaza Strip to the Mediterranean Sea, this could cripple the desalination plant near Ashkelon, which is due to be inaugurated at the end of the month.

Ha'aretz reported that U.S. Democratic Party Chair Howard Dean will come to Israel this weekend for a weeklong visit initiated by the National Jewish Democratic Council. Dean's entourage will include Democratic leaders from Florida, Arizona, and Ohio.

Yated Ne'eman printed a story by the Israeli press agency Itim, according to which outgoing U.S. Ambassador to Israel Dan Kurtzer told an assembly of the Israel Export Institute on Thursday that he is leaving Israel more optimistic than when he had arrived. The Ambassador reportedly praised the behavior of the IDF and settlers during the disengagement move.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The Prime Minister chose the least expected place, the UN General Assembly, to give the Likud a writ of divorce."

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea and diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote from New York in Yediot Aharonot (September 16): "Sharon wished to sound pragmatic, open to compromise and to agreements. That is also how he sounded. But he included several statements in his address that his listeners ... found difficult to swallow."

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote from New York on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "It was [Sharon] who had spun the dream and it was also he who conceded that the dream had been shattered."

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized: "When the Prime Minister said he was a proud Jew, it looked as if he was hesitant about how far to go."

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Let us hope that the Palestinians will listen to the message they received this important week from President Bush."

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in Ha'aretz:

"The Americans now have an interest in praising and supporting Sharon.... But even he knows, of course, that this is a time-out."

Legal commentator Zeev Segal wrote in Ha'aretz: "The High Court relies on international law (in particular, the Hague amendments) to justify the authority to build the fence."

Legal correspondent Dan Izenberg wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "What is new in Thursday's decision is that the High Court made clear that the government was not violating international law by building a fence inside the West Bank to protect Israeli settlers.... On the other hand, the court will make sure that the fence protects the settlers rather than the settlements."

#### Block Quotes:

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#### I. "Writ of Divorce to the Likud"

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (September 16): "The Prime Minister chose the least expected place, the UN General Assembly, to give the Likud a writ of divorce. The level-headed, moving and excellent speech that Sharon gave in Hebrew was aimed completely at the ears of the Center-Left voters. It did not include a single paragraph of flattery to his traditional constituency: the Likud Central Committee members and registered party members. Sharon's speech, which was laden with statements about continuing to make painful concessions to the Palestinians and about their national rights, serves as conclusive testimony to his move away from the ideological core of the Likud, his great shift to the Left and an end to his leadership of the hawkish right wing camp in Israel.... [The commentators] received a typical Shimon Peres-style speech: eloquent, well built and dovish -- a speech with meager diplomatic rewards: a few pats on the back from Bush, a few empty statements from Putin and a rather insulting statement by the president of Pakistan."

#### II. "Sharon: Palestinians Have Right to State of Their Own"

Senior columnist Nahum Barnea and diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shiffer wrote from New York in Yediot Aharonot (September 16): "Sharon wished to sound pragmatic, open to compromise and to agreements. That is also how he sounded. But he included several statements in his address that his listeners, in all the UN official languages, found difficult to swallow. One statement touched upon the UN itself.... Sharon also denounced the UN for the fact that 'no one opens their mouth' when Iran, a member of the organization, calls for the destruction of Israel. In his speech, Iran, and only it, was the enemy. He warned of its attempts to arm with nuclear weapons. Other difficult statements touched upon the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.... He mentioned the integrity of Jerusalem three times, but did not ignore the Palestinians' rights: 'The Palestinians also have a right to freedom and to a sovereign national existence in their own state.' Sharon appends conditions to this right. Now, when Israel has left Gaza, a trial period has begun for the Palestinians, during which they must 'put an end to terror and its infrastructure, terminate the anarchy of the gangs and stop the incitement.'"

#### III. "In Hebrew, Before the Entire World"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote from New York on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (September 16): "It was undoubtedly the speech of [Sharon's] life.... He maneuvered between ... two poles: on the one hand Jerusalem must be united for all eternity and the separation fence will be built as fast as possible, but on the other hand there is a need for compromise, for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and extension of a hand in peace -- sincerely.... The target audience of Sharon's speech was the entire world, the center of the political map and also the Likud Central Committee. It was he who had spun the dream and it was also he who conceded that the dream had been shattered.... Sharon's speech did not reveal anything that we did not know. Nevertheless, in that speech there was something vibrant, something touching, which we had never heard from him before, perhaps because this time, for a change, we believed him."

#### IV. "They Say That Sharon Sometimes Believes to Himself"

Nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe editorialized (September 16): "Our corrupt prime minister ascended the UN stage on Thursday and delivered an election speech. It was pretty shallow. Worse, his speech didn't convince any of his opponents.... The frowns in Sharon's face exposed his cynicism and what was obvious: that man doesn't believe in any word he ever uttered. When the Prime Minister said he was a proud Jew, it looked as if he was hesitant about how far to go. Then, he continued by saying that the Land of Israel is our open Bible -- no less. As if we had forgotten that only yesterday did we send an army to deport people from their homes in the same Biblical land."

#### IV. "Land For Carpets"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (September 16): "Knesset Member Binyamin Netanyahu, who appointed himself (belatedly) as the leader of the disengagement critics, came up with a childish slogan for the displays of international support [for Israel] -- 'carpets for land.' The former prime minister and foreign minister surely knows that the carpets of the White House, Kremlin and UN lead to realizing Israel's most vital strategic interests.... Israel has won the world's sympathy because it has given up lands it was holding.... Let us hope that the Palestinians will listen to the message they received this important week from President Bush, as he stood beside the Israeli prime minister in New York. He said Americans would very much like to say 'Gaza first,' but the situation on the ground will be the barometer of progress. It is possible to quibble over the definition of 'order,' but there are three aspects that are not in dispute -- security, quiet and governance, he said."

#### VI. "Just Don't Interfere"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in Ha'aretz (September 16): "[Sharon] asked Bush for political quiet, so that he can beat his political rivals at home. Just don't interfere. According to the Israeli version, Bush agreed.... The Americans now have an interest in praising and supporting Sharon, so that he remains in power. The scenes of anarchy in Gaza, and the violation of the border on the Philadelphia route, reinforce the Prime Minister's claim that the burden of proof now lies with the Palestinians. But even he knows, of course, that this is a time-out, and not a situation that will become permanent.... [Sharon's warnings about the Palestinian legislative elections will create] the next crisis in relations with the PA, which will cause a major headache for the Americans, who are anxious to promote democracy in the Middle East."

#### VII. "Justices Remain True to the Original International Law"

Legal commentator Zeev Segal wrote in Ha'aretz (September 16): "The verdict [of Israel's] High Court [regarding the security fence] could be seen as an answer to the different position taken by the International Court of Justice in The Hague in July 2004. The ICJ issued its legal opinion shortly after the High Court's first principle ruling on the fence, and did not refer to it. The High Court of Justice criticizes the ICJ's opinion, which it claims is based on partial factual infrastructure, and mainly for ignoring the terror issue and Israel's security needs. This approach to the ICJ's legal opinion does not mean that the High Court totally ignores international law norms, which it usually does recognize. The High Court relies on international law (in particular, the Hague amendments) to justify the authority to build the fence."

#### VIII. "ACRI Won Battle, Lost War"

Legal correspondent Dan Izenberg wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (September 16): "The Association for Civil Rights in Israel [ACRI] won the battle but lost the war in the case of [Palestinian petitioner] Zaharan Mara'be versus the State of Israel regarding the separation fence built two years ago around the Alfei Menashe enclave.... But in the broader sense, it lost the battle to persuade the High Court of Justice to accept the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which declared on July 9, 2004 that the separation fence was illegal and should be torn down because most of it was built inside the West Bank.... What is new in Thursday's decision is that the High Court made clear that the government was not violating international law by building a fence inside the West Bank to protect Israeli settlers.... On

the other hand, the court will make sure that the fence protects the settlers rather than the settlements, and that the government will not be careless -- as it was in the case of Alfei Menashe -- about how much Palestinian land it includes in the blocs."

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12. UN Reform:  
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Summary:  
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Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "A United Nations that cannot even rationally define the universal problem of terrorism, or exclude Libya and Cuba from sitting in judgment of human rights, is a fatally flawed UN."

Block Quotes:  
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"Unsalvageable?"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (September 16): "A United Nations that cannot even rationally define the universal problem of terrorism, or exclude Libya and Cuba from sitting in judgment of human rights, is a fatally flawed UN. Judging from the dynamics that surrounded [the] drafting of the outcome document, the UN remains largely at the mercy of nations for whom aggression is a relative term and a legitimate diplomatic tool, one that in fact they will gladly continue deploying at the UN itself, as they have in the past. It would actually be counterproductive to push for a more effective UN, so long as it remains, on fundamental matters of peace and security, pointed in the wrong direction."

KURTZER